

REMARKS

In the Office action, the Examiner has determined that claims directed toward two separately patentable inventions are presented in the present application, and has required Applicant to elect a single invention for prosecution on the merits. The inventions identified by the Examiner are:

Group I. Claims 1, 5, 6, and 8, drawn to a method of manufacturing a fuel cell separator.

Group II. Claims 3, 4, and 7, drawn to a method of bonding a fuel cell separator.

Applicant disputes the Examiner's proposed grouping of the claims and asserts that the proper grouping of claims includes a first group consisting of claim 1 (hereinafter, "Applicant's first group") and a second group consisting of claims 3 – 8 (hereinafter, "Applicant's second group"). In this regard, it is noted that the Examiner's grouping is presumably principally based on the preambles of the independent claims. In so grouping the claims, the Examiner has failed to appreciate the technical features recited within the bodies of the claims. With reference to the features recited within the claims, it is considered apparent that the Applicant's first and second groups are the appropriate claim groupings.

Specific reference to the claim features shows that, contrary to the Examiner's proposed grouping, claims 3 – 8 share a special technical feature that differs from the special technical feature of claim 1. Particularly, each of claims 3 – 8 share the special technical feature of bonding the separator and layers together by friction heat generated by vibration. On the other hand, claim 1 includes a feature of

radiating an electron beam onto a resinous separator to cure the separator. The bonding of the separator and layers together by friction heat generated by vibration is a special technical feature that is shared by each of claims 3 – 8. Therefore, the Applicant's proposed second group encompasses a set of claims that include a shared special technical feature and therefore share a unity of invention. Applicant asserts that the claim groupings should be revised as above.

With reference to the Applicant's first group and Applicant's second group, Applicant hereby elects Applicant's second group, claims 3 – 8, for prosecution on the merits. Should the Examiner not find the above groupings persuasive, Applicant elects Examiner's Group II, claims 3, 4, and 7, for prosecution on the merits.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 18-0160, our Order No. SHM-15810.

Respectfully submitted,

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